

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

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PARENTING MATTERS

The Best Thing You Can Do for Your Children:

Love Your Spouse



DENCG/SHUTTERSTOCK

PARNELL DONAHUE

The best thing parents can do for their kids is to love each other.

Recently, my wife, Mary, and I were in my doctor's waiting room, where she found an old copy of Time magazine (May 20, 2019). Leafing through it, she came across an article with a very large headline, "LOVE YOUR SPOUSE MORE." After reading it, she handed it to me, and said, "Read this. I know you'll love it."

It began: "Parent's love for their children can make them do peculiar things. Like staying up until 1 a.m. gluing glitter on a second-grade class project. Or driving 40 miles to deliver a single soccer cleat. Or, perhaps, bribing their teenagers' way into a fancy college. But one of the weirdest things parents do is love their children more than their partners."

"Yes," I all but shouted to my wife, sitting next to me. "I finally found something in Time that I agree with!"

"Remember Mr. Friday?" I asked. "He had a bumper sticker that said, 'The best thing a man can do for his kids is to love their mother.'"



MARRIAGE AFTER CHILDREN

Taking care of your marriage is good for your spouse and your kids. Children who grow up in a home with parents who love each other are much happier and more secure than in a loveless home.

"Yes," Mary replied. "And that was way back in the early 1970s."

We talked a bit about how the Fridays were way ahead of the article and I returned to the magazine.

It went on to tell of research that showed that kids who grow up in a home with parents who show they love each other are much happier and more secure than those who grow up in a loveless home. They see how their parents treat each other and mimic that behavior with people they know. Guess what: Kids who see their parents fighting and screaming at each other scream and fight at school; the opposite is also true. How often have we heard a mother say, "He's a good kid, but he has his dad's temper," or "She's as sweet and kind as her mother!"

Too often parents become so involved in their kids' lives that they "forget" about their spouses. And after spending 25 to 30 years living for their kids, the parents become strangers to each other. Over the years, many couples have told me just that: They were very happy together until the kids came.

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Take care of your marriage—continue to share and talk—and perhaps your empty nest years will be even more fun.

The Inner Beauty of a Style Icon: Audrey Hepburn

The beloved actress, who passed away 29 years ago this month, is a timeless inspiration

KARINA SCHNEIDER

In 2006, 29 years after the Hollywood icon's passing, Audrey Hepburn was voted the most beautiful woman of all time by the British magazine *New Woman*.

Gregory Peck, her acting partner in her first Hollywood film, said in a Gero von Böhm documentary about her: "I was the happiest person in the world when I had the privilege of being her partner in her first Hollywood film. For six wonderful months, we shot in Rome. That was in 1952. The film is the story of a princess who is incognito in the city to escape her official duties. She meets a journalist, falls in love with him, but in the end, she sacrifices that love and resumes her duties as a future queen. And he returns to his newspaper job. No doubt, the princess has become a queen in real life as well. One of the most popular, talented, intelligent, sensitive, and charming actresses and friends of my life."

Originally trained as a ballet dancer, the young Hepburn gained experience in various film roles as early as 1948. In 1951, she played the main part in the successful Broadway musical "Gigi" in New York.

She was offered a starring role in "Roman Holiday" as Princess Ann, who takes a day off from her royal responsibilities in Rome. Her first Hollywood production was a great success—Hepburn received an Oscar for it—her first of four.

Hepburn humbly commented on her performance, which launched the beginning of her Hollywood career and made her a sought-after movie star: "They were looking for an unknown face. I was able to fulfill that qualification."

Connie Wald, a former famous Hollywood hostess to movie stars and Hepburn's best friend, said, "After 'Roman Holiday,' she was suddenly a star the world adored."

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PHIL BURCHMAN/GETTY IMAGES



Actress Audrey Hepburn (1929–1993) sketches on the set of "War and Peace" directed by King Vidor in 1956.

The Inner Beauty of a Style Icon: Audrey Hepburn

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And she came as a pleasant surprise because she was so different from everyone else and so unique. Not only her looks made her special, her voice alone, her diction, had a special quality. However, she herself was extremely humble when it came to her talents. She didn't want to hear all that. Everyone loved her. She was flooded with offers and invitations, but she just wanted to live a normal life."

Growing Up

Hepburn said that the upbringing of her mother, Baroness Ella van Heemstra, had a big influence on her and shaped who she was. "My mother was quite severe and, you know, compared to today's standards, very Anglo-Saxon, very Dutch. And that also perhaps is what made me what I am, but what you see has a lot to do with what she or she wanted me to be.

"I am often thought of as perhaps reserved. I've read that I'm considered sometimes a perfectionist, which I'm not. But I think it has something to do with that attitude, which I was brought up with. Of that, you know, not to fiddle or fuss about yourself, think about others first. Don't show off. Don't make a spectacle of yourself. But don't be seen to make a living out of making a spectacle of myself. And, get on with it," she told Barbara Walters in a 1989 interview.

Style

In Hollywood in the '50s and '60s, she starred in films by some of the best directors of the time, and alongside famous male leads such as Humphrey Bogart in "Sa-

Actors Audrey Hepburn and William Holden on the set of "Sabrina" in New York in October 1953.



ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

Hepburn knew from her own experience what it meant to live as a hungry child amid war and bombs.

Hepburn stars as Princess Ann in the romantic comedy "Roman Holiday" in 1953.

brina," Henry Fonda in "War and Peace," Fred Astaire in "Funny Face," Gary Cooper in "Love in the Afternoon," Cary Grant in "Charade," and Sean Connery in "Robin and Marian."

In many of her films, she was dressed by Hubert de Givenchy. Long before the famous "Breakfast at Tiffany's," Givenchy created the world-famous Audrey Hepburn look—elegant, simple, and timeless. Her son Sean Ferrer describes their collaboration this way: "She saw the clothes he created as the beautiful vase that would enhance a simple field flower, whereas he viewed them as the vase that is kept simple so that nothing will detract from the natural beauty of the flower itself. ... [That] elegance had its roots in both their inner values. It came from the right place. It wasn't a way to be noticed but a way to be humble."

Hepburn made 25 films in her career; her performances became great successes and yet she made far fewer films compared to others.

"I have always cared terribly about my private life," she said. "Once I had my boys, I wanted to spend a lot of time with them. What I did before my children were born is that I would do two films in the year and then took one year off, because I have never quite understood how you can be a good wife and be gone all the time making a movie.

"And neither ... I could understand how you can be a mother if you can't take your children with you and you are not making the pictures at home. So I didn't want to leave my children, I didn't want to leave my husband. This is why I didn't work very much. And especially when my oldest son started going to school. Because when he was smaller he came with me. But once he started to go to school I stayed home too," she said in an interview with Ivo Niehe.



A portrait of Audrey Hepburn by Bud Fraker.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Commitment

Born in Belgium in 1929 and raised in Holland, she first came into contact with the U.N. Children's Relief Fund at the end of World War II in bombed-out Arnhem; the agency provided food for the city. Hepburn knew from her own experience what it meant to live as a hungry child amid war and bombs.

In 1989, she became a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and used her popularity in the last years of her life to raise awareness about children suffering in poor and war-torn areas of the world.

At the service marking her passing on Jan. 20, 1993, some of her favorite lines by author Sam Levenson were recited by her son Sean Ferrer:

Time-Tested Beauty Tips

For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.

For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.

For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.

For beautiful hair, let a child run his fingers through it once a day. For poise, walk with the knowledge you'll never walk alone.

We leave you a tradition with a future.

The tender loving care of human beings will never become obsolete.

People even more than things have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed and redeemed.

Never throw out anybody.

Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you'll find one at the end of your arm. As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands: one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.

Your "good old days" are still ahead of you. May you have many of them.

need washing, and that we have such a convenient machine that does the bulk of the task for us. It was a very enlightening load of laundry, I must say.

Especially in running a household and caring for family, we can convince ourselves that the work we do is mundane and unimportant, just something that needs to be done, and as quickly as possible, so we can get on with life.

But these moments, these tasks, they are life. Just as easily as we can decide to see such work as ordinary, we can recognize its extraordinariness as well.

What happens to the quality of your life and your perspective on the world when joy and beauty can be found in tasks as simple as doing laundry, washing dishes, or making beds? What if you stopped dreading paying bills and instead saw it as a privilege to be a steward of your blessings? What if waking up early was truly greeted with immense gratitude for the potential of a new day?

If gratitude and love are poured into the peanut butter sandwich with a side of apple slices you prepare for your kids, might it taste better? Will you smile more when you serve it to them? Will they smile back? Will you pause for a moment and recognize that there will come a day when you'll miss making these peanut butter sandwiches for them? What a gift to have this moment with them right now.

If you're knee-deep in the responsibilities of home and family life, and other responsibilities, I urge you to put down your complaints, let go of any resentment you hold for having to take on so much, and instead bask in the beauty and joy of this life—full of color and variety, opportunities to improve and be creative—as well as the privilege to be tasked with the important work of supporting your family, maintaining your household, and caring for your loved ones.

Beauty in life is truly to be found in the simple things.

What if you stopped dreading paying bills and instead saw it as a privilege to be a steward of your blessings?



ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

HOME LIFE

Finding Beauty in the Little Things

BARBARA DANZA

The other day, I was filling up my washing machine for what was probably load number 1,658,432 of my life. The sun was shining through the window, and as the suds began to develop, I happened to notice the beautiful pink, blue, and purple hues being reflected in the bubbles. They had a pearlescent quality, and for some reason they seemed just so beautiful to me at that moment. I paused my rushing around to continue to watch the pretty bubbles form as the machine filled.

Perhaps you've had a similar experience—a moment when you've allowed your mind to become fully present and

centered not on what has happened or what you intend to do, but on what is happening that very moment, right there in front of you. There's so much beauty and joy to behold in even the simplest of things if we're aware enough to take note.

As I stared at my laundry bubbles that day, I started to think about all of the things I miss as I go about my busy life. Slowly and more carefully than usual, I placed the laundry items in the machine. The task didn't really seem to take much longer than it otherwise would, but my mindset was in a much better place. I pondered how fortunate my family and I were to have so many garments to choose from and that



Sometimes the small things—even chores—hold joy if only we can have a mindset of gratitude.

GRAVITY IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

MART PRODUCTION/PEXELS

PARENTING MATTERS

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The authors noted, "That by the age of 50-55, [the parents] can't go to a restaurant and have a conversation." So true. Far too many times, Mary and I have been at a restaurant and watched couples at tables next to us spend the whole evening and never say a word.

It's important to have dinner with your whole family, but make sure you have at least one date night every week—without the kids.

What a shame! Yes, it's important to have dinner with your whole family, but make sure you have at least one date night every week—without the kids.

During our many years of marriage, Mary frequently reminded me, "The kids came to live with us, not the other way around. Think about it: They came to live with us for 18 years, then leave. We married each other to live with until 'Death do us part.' The kids need to know that, and adjust."

Marriage lesson for the day: Don't stop loving, don't stop sharing, don't stop talking, and you will make the empty nest years more fun, and maybe, just maybe, make them the best years of your life!

Having said all that, let me ask, how is your "Have more fun with your family" effort coming?

Many of us had a great snowfall last week. Did you and your kids take advantage of the snowy hills in your neighborhood? Were you able to play some board games after dinner



OLIVER ROSSI/UNSPLASH

with the kids? Dig out the Monopoly game for your older ones, and play "Old Maid," "Memory," or "Chutes and Ladders" with the younger set? If you did, you know they love you for it! Remember: one night a week as a couple to assure your retirement years are filled with happiness and six nights each week with your kids to help them become the best version of themselves.

Enjoy your kids and your spouse, and may God continue to bless you and your family!

Dr. Parnell Donahue is a pediatrician, a military veteran, and the author of four books, a blog, and ParentingWithDrPar.com. He writes The Parenting Matters Podcast and is host of WBOU's "Parenting Matters" show. He and his wife, Mary, have four adult children; all hold PhDs, two are also MDs. Contact him at Parenting-Matters.com

▲ Kids naturally imitate their parents. Be a loving model and they will follow your example



Have fun as a family—get outside or enjoy some games indoors.

THE EPOCH TIMES INTERVIEWS SHEN YUN AUDIENCES

LARRY DYE/THE EPOCH TIMES



Shen Yun Performing Arts' curtain call at the Boch Center Wang Theatre in Boston on Dec. 27, 2017.

Shen Yun Gives Hope in 'Outgrowing the Pandemic,' Says Physician

EPOCH NEWSROOM

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.—Mark Sibley, an eye surgeon, and Barbara Robinson attended the Jan. 15 matinee of Shen Yun in Little Rock's Robinson Performance Hall.

"We love the synchronized dancing and the synchronized movements," Sibley said. "The colors are beautiful, and the story that they're telling is for the history of China culture. We're so glad that it's being brought to us and that we can witness it. Everything about this performance shows how much rehearsal it takes in practice... and we're seeing nearly perfection in every performance. And every step in every performer is beautiful."

Shen Yun has wowed audiences worldwide with its classical Chinese dance and live orchestra since 2006. Based in New York,

Shen Yun produces a new and original program every year.

"The colors are so vivid that they're just unreal, and the dancers are just so skilled," said Robinson. "The athletic ability that they have is just really wonderful.

"You have to come and see it yourself to really get the effects of it."

A number featuring dueling restaurateurs touched Sibley. Though the chefs competed tooth and nail, they came together when disaster struck.

"I love the fact that we're getting to see how loving and caring the people from China are," Sibley said. "And we're certainly sad that things have changed."

Shen Yun unfortunately is not allowed to be performed in China, as many of its performers are religious refugees due to persecution from the communist regime there.

In the program, Shen Yun raises awareness about the realities of what Chinese people face today.

In the end, Shen Yun's message is one of hope and redemption, something audiences say is welcome during a pandemic.

Asked whether he had any doubts coming to attend a performance due to COVID-19, Sibley said: "The beautiful thing is that everybody is doing what they can to protect themselves. And it's refreshing to see hundreds of beautiful, attractive, young smiling faces in each scene and each set. ... And we're going to outgrow the pandemic and outgrow the mask, and [Shen Yun] almost gives us hope in seeing that that's what we're going to have in the near future—smiling faces again."

Yawen Hung contributed to this report.



Dr. Mark Sibley and Barbara Robinson at the Jan. 15 matinee of Shen Yun in Little Rock, Ark.

“We're going to outgrow the pandemic and outgrow the mask, and [Shen Yun] almost gives us hope in seeing that.

MARK SIBLEY,
eye surgeon

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MADELINE DEITERS AND THREELINE ART



The mural honors first responders as well as veterans from various past conflicts.



Madeline Deiters stands by her mural in Marion, Ill.

HONORING THE BRAVE

Patriotic 14-Year-Old Paints Mural Honoring Military, First Responders

EPOCH INSPIRED STAFF

One young artist from Marion, Illinois, has painted an 8,000 square-foot mural highlighting American military and first responders—from Iwo Jima to Vietnam, and from Operation Iraqi Freedom to 9/11. Madeline “Maddie” Deiters, 14, a ninth-grader who’s been homeschooled her whole life, began mapping her composition just days after Sept. 11, 2021, and the massive mural took eight weeks to finish, crossing an expanse of wall wrapping around three sides of a large industrial building.

Depicted are soldiers and Marines, a C-130, as well as the flag raisings of Iwo Jima and 9/11. You’ll see brave policemen confronting crime and first responders saving lives.

“My father, uncle, grandfather, and great-grandfather have served in the Army during World War II, the Vietnam War, Desert

Veterans stopped to tell her their stories of loved ones they lost in the line of duty.

Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom,” Deiters told The Epoch Times. “I have to be honest that I didn’t know much about the Vietnam War and all the jobs that first responders do.

“I had to do some deep research in order to respectfully and accurately design and paint emblems, soldiers and their gear, famous patriotic images, and iconic photos,” she added. “It was also a heavy burden to paint images that are so near and dear to people’s hearts.”

She depicted a tormented servicemember at the Vietnam Memorial and scenes of sacrifice and heroism across generations. Most prominently featured is an enormous American eagle wrapping the corner of two walls.

After winning the bid to paint this project with her proposed design, Deiters faced challenges from weather, equipment failure, and a nationwide paint shortage.

The patriotic artist hopes her massive tribute will put out a positive message and counteract some of the negativity in the media maligning police and calls to “defund the police.” She says the positive response she received was overwhelming.

“Many people wearing Marine or Army emblems were truly grateful to see someone painting a public display of respect and recognition, especially representing the sacrifices of soldiers during the Vietnam War,” she said. “I was overcome at how paint on a wall could stir up so many emotions for passersby.”

Veterans stopped to tell her their stories of loved ones they lost in the line of duty. As for future prospects, Deiters says she can see potential murals on buildings all across town.

You can view Deiters’ mural on Highway 37 at 205 North Court Street in Marion, Ill., and at Facebook.com/threelineart

speech was given to us, to wit, giving or receiving information or pleasure.”

To test the truth of this statement, one need only look to the news media, which have made a habit of condescendingly telling the American public what to do. Their trustworthiness in the eyes of Americans dropped to the second-lowest on record in 2021, a Gallup poll showed. If all we’re interested in is running our mouths and showing our own importance, not in persuading others to adopt our ideas, then we should follow in the media’s steps, for, as Franklin says, “a positive and dogmatic manner in advancing your sentiments may provoke contradiction and prevent a candid attention.”

“I wish well-meaning, sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner.”

Benjamin Franklin

Those who never pause to hear and consider the other side are also unlikely to convince their opponents. “If you wish information and improvement from the knowledge of others, and yet at the same time express yourself as firmly fix’d in your present opinions, modest, sensible men, who do not love disputation, will probably leave you undisturbed in the possession of your error,” Franklin writes. “And by such a manner, you can seldom hope to recommend yourself in pleasing your hearers, or to persuade

those whose concurrence you desire.”

Assume the best of your listeners, Franklin says, acting not as though you are schooling them for their own good, but calmly suggesting facts and insights as though they’re not a big deal. Franklin concludes his reflection on persuasion by quoting Alexander Pope:

“Men should be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown and propos’d
as things forgot
...
To speak, tho’ sure, with seeming diffidence.”

This last year has been full of opportunities to debate, and those debates will likely only continue. So whether you want to convince others to take the vaccine or to avoid it, that Trump won or that he’s an absolute moron, or that you are correct about any number of other polemical positions, why not take a page out of Franklin’s book?

If your mission is only to prove your own self-importance and knowledge, then by all means, enter every discussion with an argumentative mindset and pound your views into the heads of your listeners. But if your mission is to persuade and present the truth in hopes that your hearers will take heed, then, try Franklin’s suggestions. In the end, such winsomeness as he advises may just change the world. Or at least your corner of it.

Annie Holmquist is the editor of Intellectual Takeout and the online editor of Chronicles Magazine, both projects of the Charlemagne Institute. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.

A LESSON FROM BEN FRANKLIN

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

Ah, it’s January of another year! That means it’s also a time for fresh starts and new goals.

One of my goals this year is to finally read “The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.” Although I’ve perused large portions of it in the past, reading it straight through has been on my to-do list for some time, and now that I’ve started, my copy is already filling up with underlining and penciled notes in the margin.

Hitting page 13, I came across a nugget of wisdom perfect for our times, in which many strong and polarizing opinions flow freely. Franklin is discussing his journey in learning how to properly persuade and inform others while in conversation, rather than to simply debate and argue with them. Having been on both the giving and receiving end of such argumentative conversations in the last year—as, I’m sure, have many of you—I found Franklin’s remarks a gentle reminder that, if we are to win the world to our way of thinking, we must practice effective methods of persuasion.

“I wish well-meaning, sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner,” Franklin begins, showing that our influence on others is reduced by an attitude of overconfidence. Franklin says that this type of approach “seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat every one of those purposes for which

In any argument, listening to—and considering—the opinion of the person you’re speaking with is key.



GAUDILAB/SHUTTERSTOCK

HISTORY

Uncovering Mother Teresa’s Hidden Family History

The unending pain of Albanian history and the dark sorrows of her relatives forged her character

MICHAEL COOK

“By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus.”

This modest autobiography could belong to no one other than Goxhe Bojaxhiu, better known around the world as Mother Teresa. Long before her death in 1997 and her elevation to the status of a Catholic saint in 2016, Mother Teresa fascinated biographers. Malcolm Muggeridge’s BBC studio interview in London in 1968, followed by a 1969 documentary filmed in Calcutta and a 1971 book, “Something Beautiful for God,” launched what might almost be described as a Mother Teresa industry.

Gezim Alpion is an Albanian-born academic at the University of Birmingham, in the UK, whose interests include the sociology of religion and of celebrity. “Mother Teresa: The Saint and Her Nation” is his second book about his famous compatriot. He is regarded as “the most authoritative English-language author” on her and “the founder of Mother Teresa Studies”—even though he doesn’t follow any faith, describing himself as a “spiritual rationalist.” Others have written about her good deeds and her spirituality; Alpion examines her Albanian identity. This angle is almost always forgotten, as Goxhe Bojaxhiu left her home in Skopje (which is today the capital of the republic of North Macedonia) when she was 18 and today is completely identified with India.

She never imagined that people would regard her as the greatest Albanian since the medieval warlord and patriot Skanderbeg (1405–1468). In fact, Alpion discovered that she swore to her mother when she left that “I will never speak in Albanian until we meet again.” And she kept that promise, within the bounds of civility. She never did see her mother again. She had a cousin and adopted sister, Filomena, whom she loved dearly, who migrated to Australia. Mother Teresa visited her in 1969, and insisted on speaking English, even though Filomena had never mastered the language. Even during eight trips to Albania late in her life, she spoke in English.

Alpion unravels this mystery by reviewing the ceaseless pain of Albanian history and digging into the saint’s background on both sides of her family.

Albanians cannot reminisce about a glorious past as a powerful empire, as other small European countries can—the Bulgarians, the Armenians, the Greeks, or Lithuania. Periodic invasions and persecutions by Serbs and Turks have sent waves of Albanian migrants fleeing both east and west. In Syria there are—or used to be, before the chaos of its barbarous civil war—small communities of ethnic Albanians called the Arnaut. In Italy there are enough small villages of Albanian speakers to justify two Byzantine-rite, Albanian-speaking Catholic bishops.

People with Albanian backgrounds have played significant roles in history. Apart from Skanderbeg and Kemal Atatürk, Alpion makes a case for the Corsican adventurer Napoleon Bonaparte. And there have been



DOMINIQUE FAGET/APF VIA GETTY IMAGES

Mother Teresa hugs a child in West Beirut on August 14, 1982.

four Popes from Albania or with Albanian backgrounds, most recently the 18th-century pontiff Clement XI (who was born as Giovanni Francesco Albani).

In recent centuries, Albanian speakers have been crushed between the Orthodox Serbs and Greeks and the Muslim Turks, which accounts for the fact that only 10 percent, more or less, of Albanians in Albania and Kosovo currently identify as Roman Catholics. The Serbs wanted the Albanians to become Orthodox and the Turks wanted them to become Muslim. Unfortunately, for centuries the Vatican, which is just across the Adriatic Sea, was not prepared to defend Albanian Catholics, Alpion says. It had bigger fish to fry—a charm offensive with the Serbs.

Ethnic cleansing and massacres continued into the 20th century. As late as the 1950s, the governments of Yugoslavia and Turkey made a pact that would have allowed the expatriation of 1 million Albanians to Turkey. In the end, about 100,000 were expelled. It was, comments Alpion, “state-endorsed human trafficking of the population of... entire regions of an ancient, homogenous nation.”

What does this grim background have to do with Mother Teresa?

Alpion has dug deep into her family history and discovered that it is blood-stained and nationalistic. He is the first to publish the sketchy details.

“Land of Albania! ... thou rugged nurse of savage men!” sang the 19th-century English

“It was during those turbulent formative years in Skopje that Goxhe’s lifelong gratitude to Jesus began.”

Gezim Alpion

poet Lord Byron. He wasn’t wrong. Goxhe’s maternal great-grandfather, Pjetër Bardhi, was murdered in a blood feud. His son, Goxhe’s grandfather, Ndue, avenged him and was murdered in his turn. Ndue’s son Gjon, Goxhe’s uncle, was another victim of the blood feud.

And then there was the ardent nationalism of Goxhe’s businessman father, Nikollë. He worked to promote education in Albanian and lobbied to keep Albanian schools from closing down under Serb pressure. He even managed to secure funding for existing schools and for opening new ones. He opposed the creation of the kingdom of Yugoslavia, which scooped up Albanian territory after World War I.

This probably led to his death. In 1919 his business went bankrupt and not long after he was poisoned after a political meeting in Belgrade. His final hours were agonizing and traumatized the family, including nine-year-old Goxhe.

Alpion believes that even Goxhe’s name was a nationalist gesture. In Albanian it means “rosebud” or “little flower.” When she was born in 1910, both Slav nationalists and the Ottoman authorities frowned upon the use of the Albanian language. Naming their infant daughter Goxhe was “a small but significant act of defiance,” Alpion believes. And her baptismal name, Agnes, was ostentatiously Roman Catholic.

This dark background was, as they say, or used to say, “character-forming,” for Goxhe. But in the wake of World War I, there was more to come. Her mother’s brother Mark, a prosperous businessman, had four children. First one of the sons died of the Spanish flu, then the heartbroken father; then another daughter and her husband, and yet another daughter. Finally Goxhe’s grandmother died. Only Filomena, who came to live with Goxhe and her mother Roza, survived.

Alpion believes that these childhood experiences prepared Mother Teresa for her vocation in the Missionaries of Charity. “It was during those turbulent formative years in Skopje that Goxhe’s lifelong gratitude to Jesus began. This was also the moment when she started thinking that the best way to show her thankfulness was to help people in distress. This was one of the reasons why she chose India as her destination when she learned about its poor from Balkan missionaries who had served there.”

All this new information suggests that Mother Teresa was well-prepared for what Catholic mystics call “the dark night of the soul,” in which she was shaken by doubts about God’s existence and his loving providence throughout her long years as a nun.

No one ever doubted that Goxhe Bojaxhiu was a remarkable woman. This scrupulously researched study shows that she was even more remarkable than we thought. As Alpion concludes, “Mother Teresa’s life, ministry and legacy show the need to include ‘women’ in Thomas Carlyle’s contention that ‘the history of the world is but the Biography of great men.’”

This article was originally published on MercatorNet. Michael Cook is the editor of MercatorNet.

ACTS OF KINDNESS

‘A Little Pocket of Humanity’ on I-95

LOUISE BEVAN

When a couple was stranded on a highway behind a Baltimore bakery truck during a heavy snowstorm, they reached out to the company in hopes to open the truck so as to help feed the people who were stuck in their cars. Bowled over by their response, the driver and the bakery went viral for their act of kindness.

On Jan. 3, a 50-mile stretch of Interstate 95 between Washington and Richmond, Virginia, suffered heavy snowfall. Many drivers got stuck overnight with nothing to eat or drink, but relief came when Casey Holihan and her husband, John Noe, who were traveling from Ellicott City, Maryland, to North Carolina, decided to do something. “This is an incredible thank you to Schmidt Baking Company for your humanity and compassion,” Casey wrote on Facebook. “After almost 21 hours of being stuck on 95 South, sleeping here overnight, not having access to food or water, and all of the nearest towns being out of power, we were tired, frustrated, and hungry.”

Explaining the situation further, Casey wrote that many of the people who were

stuck had small children and pets in their cars. Witnessing the situation, the couple contacted Schmidt Baking Company and begged them to open the truck that was stuck with them.

Casey said she didn’t think it would work, but less than 20 minutes later, she and John got a personal call from parent company H&S Bakery’s co-owner and Senior Vice President of Transportation Chuck Paterakis. Casey was instructed to pass the phone to Maryland resident Ron Hill, the truck driver, and Paterakis gave the go-ahead. “[Hill] opened the back of the truck, and with the help of some people close by, passed out bread to more than 50 cars who were all incredibly thankful,” Casey said. “This was one of the kindest moments I have ever witnessed. Thank you, Schmidt.”

Casey’s post went viral, amassing 50,000 reactions and 29,000 shares, winning the hearts of netizens.

During the snowstorm, temperatures dropped into the teens, Baltimore Magazine reported. Hill, who gave out 500 of the truck’s estimated 8,000 loaves of bread, told the media outlet that he had been praying in the back of his truck before the couple

came to him.

He was already thinking that he should hand out bread and “catch the weight later.”

“From what I can gather, it was very icy, slippery, and they were on somewhat of a hill,” said Paterakis, who runs H&S with his three brothers. “There were a lot of people who were hungry, but didn’t want to get out of the car or open the door because they had limited gas and didn’t want the heat to escape.”

“When I heard from Casey, all of these things were going through my mind, but the main thing was that this is our core value. We’re cultured to help out in situations when things are desperate.”

Casey and John, who were among those who helped Hill distribute the loaves, were touched to find community in the midst of crisis. Casey said that as they were going up to people holding the bread, motorists were touched knowing that it was for free.

She said that just a few hours prior, everyone stuck in the jam seemed frustrated and kept honking.

“But then you remember that these are real people. ... We got to talk to some of them, and pet their dogs, and ask them



COURTESY OF CASEY HOLIHAN NOE

Casey Holihan and her husband, John Noe.

about where they were going. It was a little pocket of humanity and community that we created on that stretch of I-95 that won’t be forgotten,” Casey said.

After 27 hours of being stuck in the snow, Casey and John used shovels that were in their trunk to help clear a pathway to freedom. All vehicles were cleared by the evening of Jan. 4, and no injuries or deaths were reported.

Share your stories with us at emg.inspired@epochtimes.com, and get your daily dose of inspiration by signing up for the Epoch Inspired newsletter at TheEpochTimes.com/newsletter.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION

The Power of Thank-You Notes

Take time to thank people in writing; that will set you apart from others.



FEI MENG

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

Having an attitude of gratitude can help an individual, especially younger individuals and those early in their careers, to maximize their potential.

There was a cartoon in a national magazine several years ago that depicted a man with a clipboard talking to two parents of a child sitting at a desk who had apparently just completed a test. The man with the clipboard said: "I have some good news and I have some bad news. Your son's test shows he is very intelligent, but it also indicates he will not learn to write thank-you notes and, therefore, he won't amount to much." There's wisdom in that cartoon.

Every day we have opportunities to thank people who assist us or have assisted us in the past. The list is endless: relatives, teachers, neighbors, peers, superiors, and others. But, for a number of reasons, the majority of people fail to do that.

There was a report in 2021 that documented the percentage of people who wrote a personal note of congratulations and/or thank you. Thirty-one percent of the people wrote a thank-you note this past year. Another 16 percent said they had written one in the past 1 to 5 years. Thirty-seven percent said it had been five years or more since they had written such a note and 15 percent said they had never written a note of thanks or congratulations. One of the reasons writing thank-you notes separates you from the majority of others is because the majority of people don't take the time and effort to do it.

What is often overlooked is that thank-you notes are a powerful tool. A best-selling book by John Kralik, "365 Thank Yous: The Year a Simple Act of Daily Gratitude Changed My Life," chronicles the success of one man who discovered the power of thank-you notes. At age 53, Kralik was at the nadir of his fortunes and living in a small apartment, where he froze in the winter and baked in the summer. He had problems too numerous to recount. During a walk on New Year's Day, he was struck by the belief his life might become at least tolerable if, instead of focusing on what he didn't have, he could find a way to be grateful for what he had. He thought writing thank-you notes might be the best way to express his gratitude for what he did have. He set a goal of writing one a day for 365 days. It turned his life around and surprising benefits came his way.

Most people have stories about people who wrote them thank-you notes. I share one of mine:

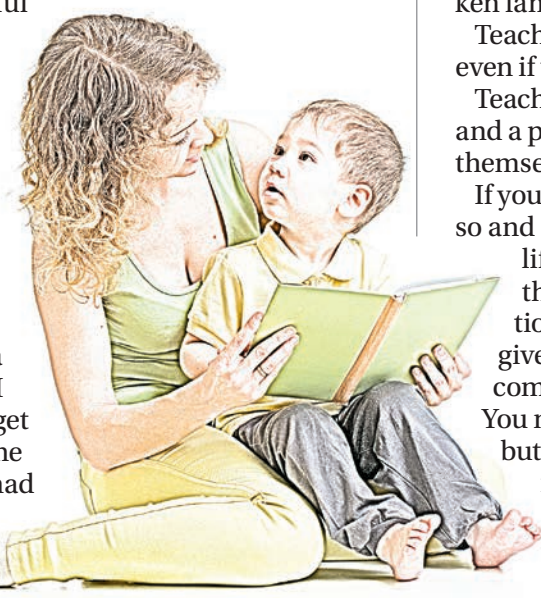
Years ago, I gave a presentation to a large group of high school students. I didn't expect any thanks and didn't get any. Two days later, a young lady came to my office with a loaf of bread she had baked with a ribbon tied around it and a thank-you note. Kind of hokey?

“Every day we have opportunities to thank people who assist us or have assisted us in the past.”

Terence Moore, Michigan

“Feed your kids good stuff. Give them hearty helpings of faith-filled and inspirational articles to read.” writes Rosmary Grisafe from California.

OKSANA KUZMINA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Perhaps, but if she ever wants me to open doors for her, I'm not only going to open them, I'm going to kick them down. It shouldn't come as a surprise she was valedictorian of her class and is now a very successful nurse practitioner.

One last comment: Never confuse kindness with weakness. Indeed, it is just the opposite. Insecure, self-centered people are often those who fail to be kind to others on a daily basis. Well-written thank-you notes inspire others.

Terence Moore, Michigan
Retired president of MidMichigan Health System; author of "Lessons in Leadership and Career Survival"

Seek God's Approval, Not Man's
Begin early to ignore the temptation to look at other people for approval. So much of our world's activities are centered around pleasing people around us. The desire for fame, to be the first to do something, to spend time and money on our appearance, such as approved wardrobe and hairstyles, to say the cool jargon, to get a prestigious job, to know the right people—the list goes on and on of the ways we cater to other humans. Many of us are only realizing this as we get old. How much better to begin early to look solely for God's approval, in light of the eternity spent with him.

Claudia Shick, Idaho

So you're preparing to get married and you want to create the happiest family you can. Here are a few hints to help you strive to that end:

It's important for a successful family to have a father's discipline and a mother's loving attention working as a team with their eyes on the prize of guiding their children's souls to heaven.

Introduce spirituality to your children from birth and teach them to pray daily. When they approach the dating age, speak to them about God's real purpose (procreation) for his gift of intimacy.

Your example of having courted a potential spouse who had the same spiritual beliefs as you, illustrates that you and your spouse have committed to keeping the wedding vows, "til death do us part," which will help them endure through life's struggles. (If there is no spiritual commitment, chances of divorce are greater, adding to the multitude of broken families and broken souls.)

Teach sons to treat girls with respect even if the girls don't require it.

Teach daughters to respect themselves and a potential spouse by not putting themselves in provocative situations.

If you disagree with your children, say so and don't support a sinful action or lifestyle. If they continue in it, give them consequences for their actions and abide by them, e.g., don't give them free room and board, free computer or telephone, or car access. You may think they will love you less, but in the end, they will respect you for your resolve, especially when they accept your advice and become successful.

Ascertain what's going on in

government and discuss it with older children. Point out to them that it is not good to elect politicians swayed by those who support the taking of innocent life in abortion and deviant unnatural behavior, because those elected leaders will determine who lives and who dies and what is normal behavior even though it is deviant.

Protect, at all costs, your family. Don't yield to nonsensical comments made on liberal mainstream media. They are not experts on wholesome family life; neither are politicians who seek power and wealth, or Hollywood spokespersons who seek fame and wealth. Examine their lives: drugs, multiple marriages and divorce and suicide. Think about it. Would you trust them to be good role models for your family?

Feed your kids good stuff. Give them hearty helpings of faith-filled and inspirational articles to read. Today, children are dining on the internet, sports, movies, games, and social media, most of which abounds with physical gratification and filters out anything to do with soul searching.

Best of luck and may God bless you in your new venture.

Rosmary Grisafe, California

As a subscriber to The Epoch Times, I read with interest your published letters from readers offering their advice or experiences to the younger generation. Following is an incident that happened to me that may be of interest to your readers.

My cousin died.
Allan was my age of 77 when his heart gave out. He lived with his wife and daughter in Las Vegas and I was living in Palm Springs when I got the news. We weren't that close, but for some reason, I felt I should attend his funeral. It was a small graveside service, 10 people in a secluded place in the cemetery. I was standing in the back of the small group of mourners when I noticed his daughter standing with her head down. She was having problems with her mother at that time, so she was standing alone. While I am not overtly religious, I felt a force at my back moving me toward her, which I did. Then while standing next to her, I felt that force, once again, moving my arm around her. At that moment, it became clear to me why I drove 500 miles to be at my cousin's funeral.

Steve Lurie, Illinois

What advice would you like to give to the younger generations? We call on all of our readers to share the timeless values that define right and wrong, and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time, and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to: *Next Generation, The Epoch Times*, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

A Tale of Love and Identity

Manhattan may not be the first place you would look for a strong family with a good father, but the author of a new children's book reveals one living on a lake in Central Park. In "The Handsome Little Cygnet," writer and illustrator duo Matthew Mehan and John Folley show us a family of swans coping beautifully with an identity crisis—in lightly metered prose and 20 gorgeous watercolors.

Below, Carolyn Moynihan asks Mehan, a Washington dad, founding contributor to MercatorNet, liberal arts teacher for 20 years, and now a professor of government at Hillsdale College, about his second venture into children's literature.

Carolyn Moynihan: It has been three years since you and John Folley produced your first children's book, "Mr. Mehan's Mildly Amusing Mythical Mammals." How is that one doing out in the world?
Matthew Mehan: It's doing very well. Considering it was our first book and that we didn't know what we were doing in terms of publicity and promotion, I think it went very well. We were a best seller on Amazon, and we were the top seller for one-year sales ever for a publisher. And I continue to get touching letters from young readers.

“It sorted itself out in my mind slowly two winters ago. But obviously, like any good poet, I have to thank the heavenly 'muse.' But on a more human level, part of the inspiration came from parenting in a crazy world.”

Matthew Mehan

Ms. Moynihan: You have moved up in the academic world recently—but not so high as to disdain creating children's books. Do you have any models along that path?

Mr. Mehan: I'm sure I'm not the first, but no one leaps to mind. Now that I am a professor of government in a graduate school, I really don't see any contradiction in writing children's books, because I teach every year Aristotle's "Politics," in which he both begins and ends the art of politics with a discussion of the all-important political act of educating the next generation. So, in a fun sense but also in a very real sense, this is very much a part of my new profession.

Ms. Moynihan: I was thinking about Tolkien. It's questionable whether "The Hobbit" is a children's book, but there were his "Letters From Father Christmas" and a couple of others. Perhaps also your hero Thomas More ...
Mr. Mehan: You flatter me!

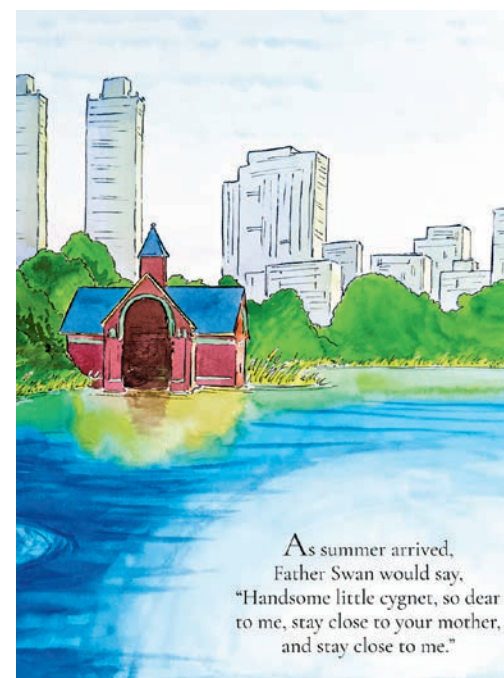
Ms. Moynihan: Besides moving from mammals to birds, how else is "The Handsome Little Cygnet" different from the first book?
Mr. Mehan: The last book was a gargantuan and elaborate cultural bonanza for middle graders, a book designed for a curious child to get lost in all summer. "The Handsome Little Cygnet" is a storybook for younger children and families to read to younger children. It has the one thing "Mr. Mehan's Mildly Amusing Mythical Mammals" lacked: the beauty of simplicity.

Ms. Moynihan: What inspired this new story?
Mr. Mehan: Frankly, I'm not sure. It sorted itself out in my mind slowly two winters ago. But obviously, like any good poet, I have to thank the heavenly "muse." But on a more human level, part of the inspiration came from parenting in a crazy world. The story features a family of swans in the big city—Manhattan actually, Central Park—and their little baby cygnet is trying to figure out what he is meant to be. And I don't have to tell you that that has become a very difficult process.

Ms. Moynihan: It's a very simple story for young children, but there are some important life lessons in it for our time. What does it say about families?
Mr. Mehan: I think it models an image of very thoughtful parents and how their calm and straightforward love for their child [or cygnet] ends up being one of the greatest gifts their child needs for growing up and becoming what he is meant to be.



TAN BOOKS



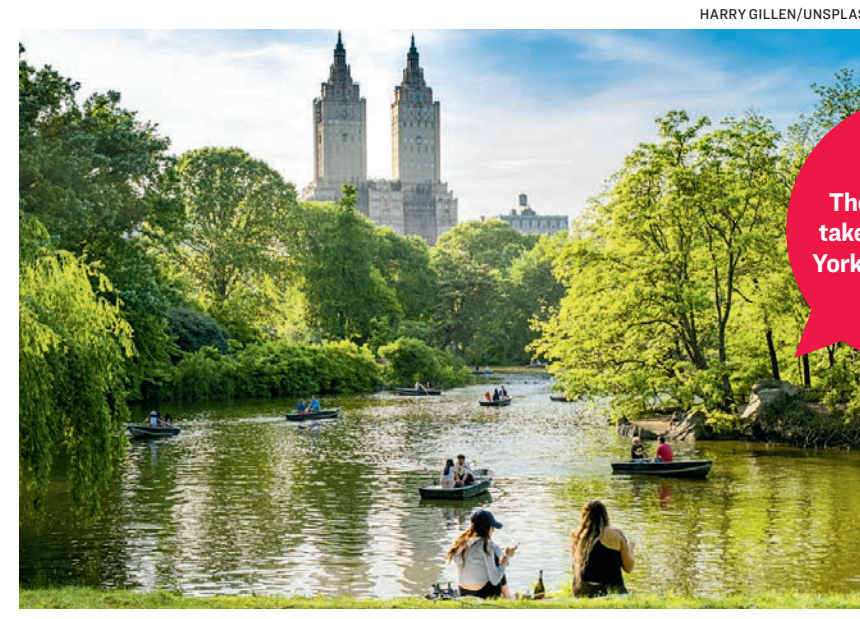
As summer arrived, Father Swan would say, "Good. Good. For little cygnet, so dear to me, stay close to your mother, and stay close to me."



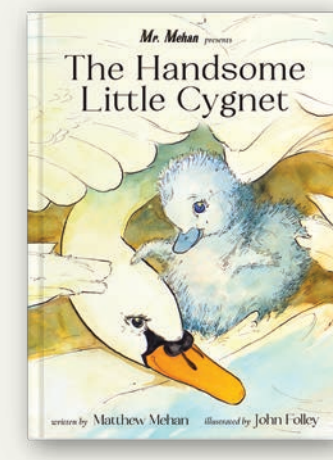
And Father Swan would sometimes reply, "Good. Good. For little cygnet, you must know, a swan's heart can wander where a swan can never go."

Ms. Moynihan: About identity?
Mr. Mehan: Our plucky little cygnet encounters a curious obstacle to growing up in a happy way that ends up being a kind of challenge to finding his authentic identity. That's why this is a kind of retelling of the "Ugly Duckling" fable by Hans Christian Andersen. This baby swan needs to know both what he is and who he is. The first part means looking around at the nature of things, and the second part means looking carefully at who really loves and cares for him. But it's a tricky thing, and I don't think there's a lot of guidance out there in kid lit or in culture generally right now, neither for children nor families generally.

Ms. Moynihan: About nature?
Mr. Mehan: I chose the setting of Central Park because it is a beautiful backdrop that was made by clever human beings—New Yorkers are very clever people!—who used art to shape and fashion the park's natural elements and heighten their beauty for our happiness. I had an old mentor, a brilliant and big-hearted teacher, who used to say, "To be a male is a question of biology; to be a man is the work of a lifetime." The first part is what we are. That's a given. But then



The book setting takes place in New York's Central Park.



Author
Matthew Mehan,
illustrated by John Folley
Publisher
Tan Books, 2021
Pages
48

Review: A Retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's 'Ugly Duckling'

JENNIFER MINICUS

Mother and Father Swan take great care in raising their son. They not only provide a safe home for him, but seek to educate him about the world around him. Father Swan makes a point of expressing the love these devoted parents have for their child and of reminding the child not to stray far from their protection.

"Handsome little cygnet, so dear to me, stay close to your mother, and stay close to me."

Young and enthusiastic, the little cygnet agrees without giving thought to the implication of his words.

"And the handsome little cygnet would quickly reply, 'I will, I will! I love you so. Why would I wander? Where would I go?'"

But a wise Father Swan emphasizes the importance of guarding one's heart.

"And Father Swan would sometimes reply, 'Good. Good. But little cygnet, you must know, a swan's heart can wander where a swan can never go.'"

The father's warnings are well-founded and, as often happens when children test their freedom, they go unheeded. For the little cygnet, previously content with his gray downy feathers, sees glistening, newly painted graffiti on a nearby bridge and decides he too must be full of color.

The young swan sullies his soft down with sticky paint only to find that the colors turn him into a greenish-brown mess. He runs to his mother who recommends that he seek the fish in the pond for help. The fish clean the little cygnet and he is returned to his former self.

Matthew Mehan packs several life lessons into "The Handsome Little Cygnet." The lifelong fidelity of the swan couple to each other, the unconditional nature of parental love, and the importance of filial love and respect for one's parents are all demonstrated in this picture book. The story also lends itself to introducing the concepts of purity and modesty to very small children.

The little cygnet learns that while some things may seem attractive, the lack of healthy self-love can lead one to try things that are harmful. The baby swan learns to appreciate his true self through his mistake and the non-judgmental forgiveness of his mother.

John Folley's illustrations of Manhattan's Central Park set the white swans in stark contrast to the vivid backgrounds of each page. The book adds a "seek-n-find" list at the end of the story, which includes New York landmarks and images from the duo's first book, "Mr. Mehan's Mildly Amusing Mythical Mammals: a Hypothetical Alphabetical."

Homeschooling the Low-Cost Way

KAREN DOLL

A single online search for homeschooling resources will turn up myriad books, curriculum packages, and resources created specifically for homeschoolers. Of course, they all look amazing, so your wish list grows. However, depending upon the number of children you plan to teach, expenses can add up quickly. But I have good news for you: You can homeschool successfully and provide your children with a well-balanced quality education while keeping costs low because there are also myriad budget-friendly resources available.

Invest in a Good How-to-Homeschool Guide

The most valuable homeschooling resource for parents is a good how-to-homeschool guide. Let me shine the spotlight on a few excellent choices. “The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home” by Susan Wise Bauer and Jessie Wise walks you step-by-step through the process of teaching your children based on each child’s developmental stage and capacity to comprehend specific subject matter.

Dr. Ruth Beechick’s “The Three R’s” and “You Can Teach Your Child Successfully” are based on common sense and the belief that parents can teach their children best. And “Home Learning Year by Year: How to Design a Creative and Comprehensive Homeschool Curriculum” by Rebecca Rupp helps you customize your homeschool program to meet each child’s needs.

You’ll refer to your how-to guide often throughout each year, and it will become a cherished resource and pay for itself before you know it.

Be sure to check out your local library, as most of them will have these top-rated homeschool guides. This way you can borrow the book(s), take notes on what you need, and renew, if necessary—all without spending a dime.

Follow a Scope and Sequence

A scope and sequence is basically a chart that shows you what to teach and when. Two great sites to find free scope and sequence charts specific to homeschoolers are SchoolhouseTeachers.com (K-12) and HewittLearning.org (K-8). Simply download the chart, print it out, and you have a priceless map for charting your home education course. Now choose from the free book and material options that you feel will best help each child to accomplish the objectives for his or her grade level.

I found that by following a scope and sequence chart, I was much less tempted to spend additional money on any extra homeschooling gems that just happened to catch my eye throughout the year.

Take Advantage of Free Homeschooling Materials
Let’s talk freebies. Don’t you just love that phrase? It certainly makes me smile. Your first stop should be a visit to some of these all-time favorites among the homeschooling community.

The most valuable homeschooling resource for parents is a good how-to-homeschool guide.

Homeschool Giveaways and Freebies (HomeschoolGiveaways.com) is a mega-site owned by homeschool mom Carrie Fernandez. You could literally spend days perusing this site with its vast amount of general homeschool planning, organization materials, curriculum reviews, tons of unit studies, teaching resources for preschoolers through high school students, parenting encouragement, and even recipes.

DIYHomeschooler.com has tons of free ebooks, unit studies, and The Finds—links to a wide variety of interesting and engaging educational activities. At FreedomHomeschooling.com, Sarah May, owner and homeschool mom, has gathered the best of the best free homeschooling curriculum sites all together in one place. Some other favorites are FreeHomeschoolDeals.com, Homeschool.com, A2Z Homeschooling.com, HomeschoolingOnAShoestring.com, and miscellaneous educational sites from NASA, National Geographic Kids, Smithsonian Learning Lab, Mensa for Kids, Funbrain, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Plimoth Patuxet Museums, and many more. And speaking of museums, many, such as the Louvre in Paris, offer virtual tours.

If you’re looking for free classes, look no further than Khan Academy, Discovery K12, and

Easy Peasy All-in-One Homeschool.

Also, public libraries across the country now allow you to borrow more than just books. Patrons can borrow a telescope, musical instruments, a sewing machine, museum passes, and even fishing poles and gear.

Another great option is to simply swap curricula with other local homeschoolers. This is a time-tested favorite among homeschooling families, because if you’re able to connect with a nearby family, chances are that this can become an ongoing tradition. If you don’t know any local homeschoolers, you can contact your state’s homeschool association or the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), and volunteer veteran homeschooling parents will assist you in connecting with local support groups, many of which hold annual or semi-annual curriculum swaps.

Buy and Sell Gently Used Books and Materials

Ask any homeschool mom and she will undoubtedly show you her stash of used books and materials that she has collected over the years. And most, if not all, will look like new. My personal experience as a veteran homeschool mom of 16 years has shown me that most homeschoolers take excellent care of their stuff.

My best advice—and something that has served us well over the years—is to not allow your kids to write in their workbooks or highlight text in their textbooks. Instead, to ensure that you get much better resale value, copy and print out any workbook pages and ask your kids to take

notes and make charts and graphs of the important points in their texts.

Some well-respected websites to buy and sell your gently used homeschooling materials are Homeschool Classifieds, Homeschool Shopper, Second Harvest Curriculum, Thriftbooks, Best Homeschool Buys, and of course, Amazon and eBay. Also, if you plan to attend a state or regional homeschool convention, most of them hold used book sales.

And for you social media-savvy parents, consider joining these Facebook groups: Homeschool Market, Homeschool Curriculum & Book Swap, and Homeschool Used Curriculum Swap.

Another option for finding a great bargain is to shop at summer yard and tag sales.

Apply for a Curriculum Grant

The Home School Legal Defense Association offers a Compassion Curriculum grant to families experiencing financial hardship yet who also desire to continue to homeschool their children. Visit the HSLDA website to learn about eligibility requirements and how to apply.

Karen Doll is a freelance writer and homeschooling consultant based in the small village of Wassergass, Pa. She enjoys writing about homeschooling, gardening, food and culture, family life, and the joys of chicken keeping. Visit her at AtHome-WithKarenDoll.wordpress.com



Homeschooling doesn't have to be an expensive endeavor.

AFRICA STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

As Schools Remain Mired in Onerous COVID-19 Policies, Now May Be the Time to Homeschool

A conversation with Kerry McDonald

BARBARA DANZA

While homeschooling has been steadily growing in popularity for decades, the past two years have brought on an explosion. It seems that a pandemic, a mature internet, and an increased awareness among parents have provided the perfect storm for millions of parents to take matters into their own hands.

I asked Kerry McDonald, a senior education fellow at the Foundation for Economic Education and author of “Unschooling: Raising Curious, Well-Educated Children Outside the Conventional Classroom,” about the variety of educational options available today and for her advice for those working their way through the decision to homeschool. Here’s what she said.

The Epoch Times: The number of families opting for an alternative to public school has skyrocketed over the past couple of years. What do you think are the most significant factors driving this shift?

Kerry McDonald: In the spring of 2020 when schools shut down and went online, parents were able to see for the first time what was actually happening in their children’s classrooms. Many of them didn’t like what they saw and were motivated to explore other education possibilities beyond an assigned district school.

As schools remained shuttered for the 2020/2021 academic year, parents felt empowered to take back control over their children’s education. In record numbers, they pulled their children out of district schools for private education options, including homeschooling, which doubled in 2020 to more than 11 percent



“It’s a great time for teachers to become education entrepreneurs! Parent demand for more and better learning options for their children has never been higher.”

Kerry McDonald

of the overall K-12 school-age population. Despite schools reopening for full-time in-person learning this fall, homeschooling and private school numbers remain high, while public schooling enrollment falls in many areas.

The Epoch Times: When people think of homeschooling, they may envision a mom and her children gathered around the kitchen table as they work through multiplication or make a volcano with baking soda and vinegar. In reality, the variety of educational choices has widened significantly, and the various alternatives look different to different families. What options should parents be aware of if they’re thinking of pulling their kids out of public school?
Ms. McDonald: Homeschooling is really a catch-all term for a whole host of schooling alternatives. Legally, it means that parents, not schools or districts, are in charge of overseeing a child’s education. In practice, it includes a wide variety of instructional approaches and educational philosophies, ranging from replicating school at home to allowing children’s interests to guide their learning using an array of digital and community-based resources to enrolling a child full time in a local learning center or micro-school—and everything in between!

The Epoch Times: What advice would you give parents who find themselves dissatisfied with their children’s current school and looking to make a change?
Ms. McDonald: You have more educational options available to you than you may think! Learning pods, homeschool co-ops, learning centers and micro-schools, education startups focused on supporting schooling alternatives, and a growing community of homeschooling families are creating and

catalyzing new models and methods for K-12 learning.

The Epoch Times: The explosion in homeschooling has also expanded opportunities for teachers. Teachers who find themselves disenchanting with the public school system have been offering their services to the growing homeschool market. What advice would you give a teacher [who would] like to capitalize on this opportunity?
Ms. McDonald: Some teachers realized during last year’s school closures that they could earn more money with fewer hours and more flexibility by serving as a tutor for learning pod families or by launching their own micro-school. Today, as teacher burn-out grows due to ongoing school coronavirus policies and staffing shortages, more teachers are choosing to leave their public school classroom, but not their profession. Instead, they are starting or joining micro-schools, offering their services as tutors and learning guides, and becoming more entrepreneurial in their approach to education. It’s a great time for teachers to become education entrepreneurs! Parental demand for more and better learning options for their children has never been higher.

The Epoch Times: To the parent about to pull his or her child out of the public school system, but feeling a bit nervous about their decision, what would you say to encourage them?
Ms. McDonald: Now is the ideal moment for parents to experiment with a different learning model for their children. Public schools remain mired in burdensome coronavirus policies and procedures, and some schools are moving back to online learning for part of the school week. This is aggravating parents and could be just the nudge they need to opt out of the public system.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

A Child’s Prayer

Matilda Barbara Betham-Edwards (1836–1919)

God make my life a little light
Within the world to glow;
A little flame that burneth bright,
Wherever I may go.

God make my life a little flower
That giveth joy to all,
Content to bloom in native bower,
Although the place be small.

God make my life a little song
That comforteth the sad
That helpeth others to be strong,
And makes the singer glad.

God make my life a little staff
Whereon the weak may rest,
That so what health and strength I have
May serve my neighbors best.

God make my life a little hymn
Of tenderness and praise,
Of faith, that never waxeth dim,
In all His wondrous ways.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES

WHAT DO YOU CALL A CANINE MAGICIAN?



KASHAEVA IRINA/SHUTTERSTOCK

“You don’t choose your family. They are God’s gift.”

DESMOND TUTU (1931–2021), SOUTH AFRICAN ANGLICAN BISHOP



STOCKYIMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

This Week in History

INDIA ACHIEVES INDEPENDENCE

On Jan. 26, 1950, India, the world’s second-most populous country, gained its independence from Great Britain and became a constitutional republic. To this day, India remains the largest democracy in the world.

ALL PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES

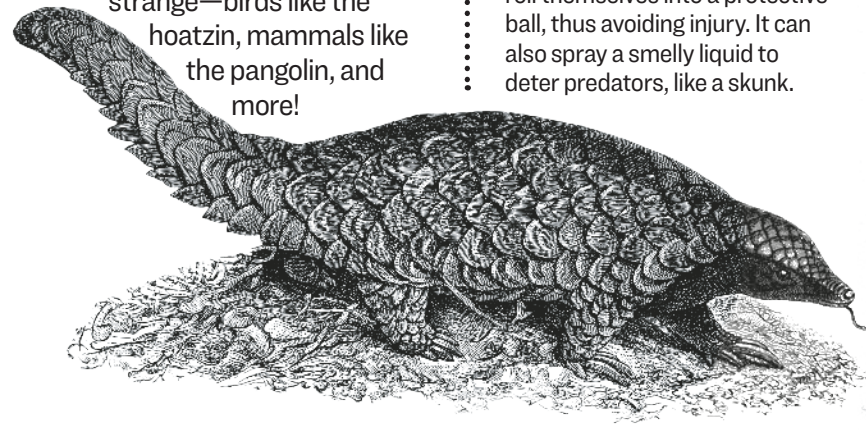
By Aidan Danza, age 15

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

SOME VERY STRANGE ANIMALS

Once you leave America, you can see a vast variety of flora and fauna,

of which there is no equivalent here in the United States. You might even find some animals to be quite strange—birds like the hoatzin, mammals like the pangolin, and more!



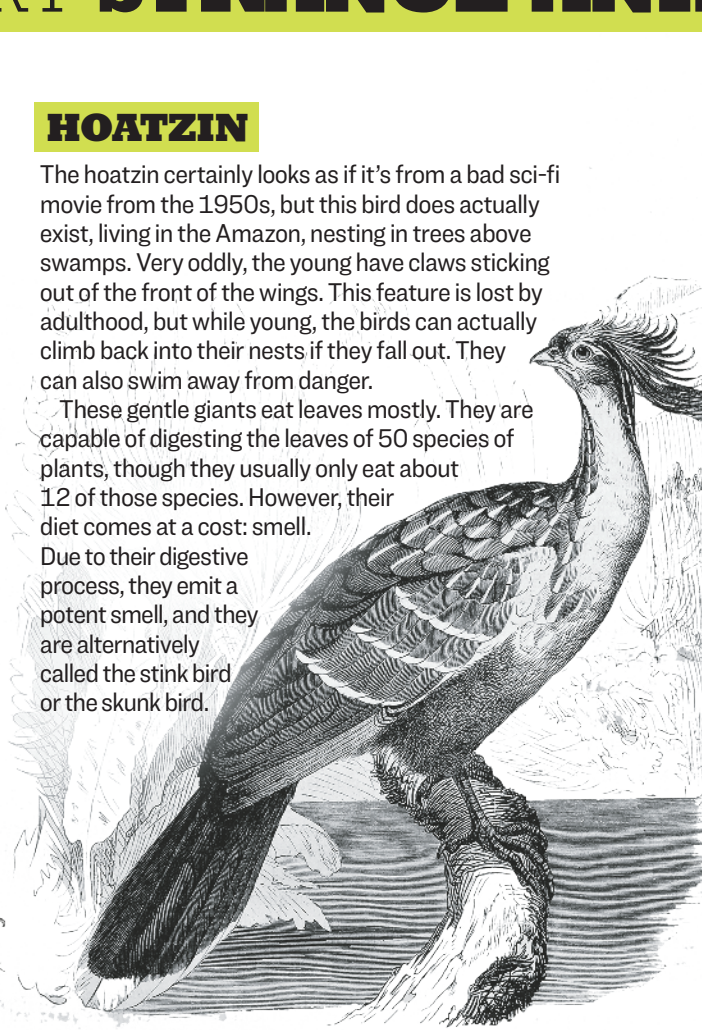
PANGOLIN

These mammals actually have scales! They are similar to anteaters, but are smaller and live in Africa and Asia. Their tongue is also longer than the pangolin itself, originating not in the mouth but at the bottom of the ribcage, near the hips of the rear legs. They lack teeth, but do all their chewing in their stomach, much like a bird’s gizzard, though their preferred diet of ants doesn’t need much chewing. If threatened, they can roll themselves into a protective ball, thus avoiding injury. It can also spray a smelly liquid to deter predators, like a skunk.

HOATZIN

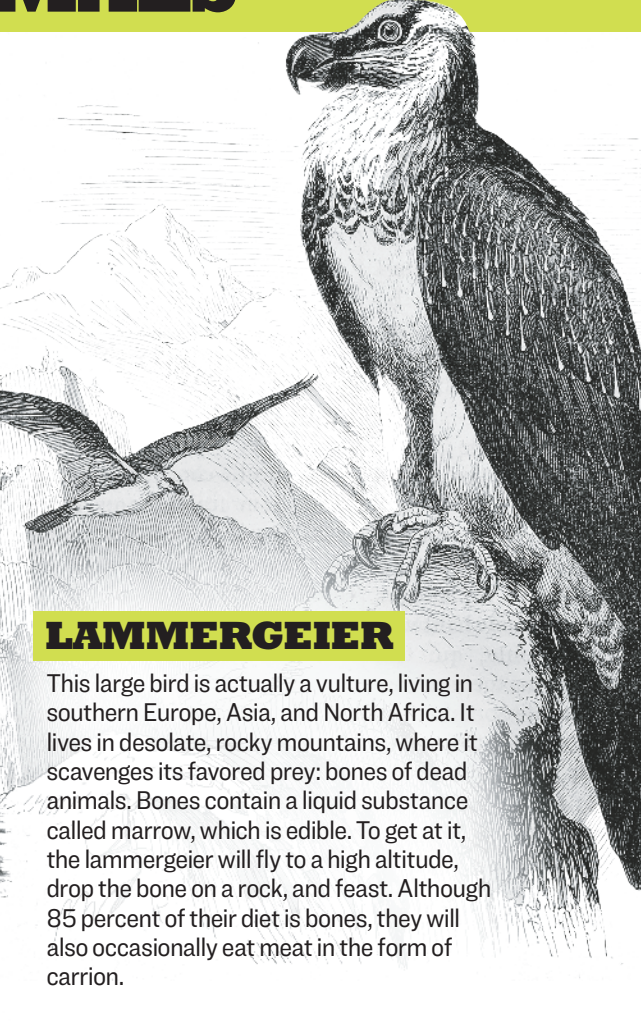
The hoatzin certainly looks as if it’s from a bad sci-fi movie from the 1950s, but this bird does actually exist, living in the Amazon, nesting in trees above swamps. Very oddly, the young have claws sticking out of the front of the wings. This feature is lost by adulthood, but while young, the birds can actually climb back into their nests if they fall out. They can also swim away from danger.

These gentle giants eat leaves mostly. They are capable of digesting the leaves of 50 species of plants, though they usually only eat about 12 of those species. However, their diet comes at a cost: smell. Due to their digestive process, they emit a potent smell, and they are alternatively called the stink bird or the skunk bird.

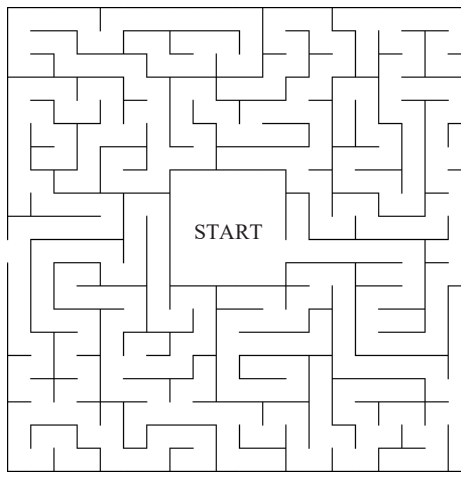


LAMMERGEIER

This large bird is actually a vulture, living in southern Europe, Asia, and North Africa. It lives in desolate, rocky mountains, where it scavenges its favored prey: bones of dead animals. Bones contain a liquid substance called marrow, which is edible. To get at it, the lammergeier will fly to a high altitude, drop the bone on a rock, and feast. Although 85 percent of their diet is bones, they will also occasionally eat meat in the form of carrion.



AMAZING ESCAPES!



USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one “unique” solution but, there may also be “equivalent” solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 9 | | |
| 5 | 8 | | |
| + | - | x | ÷ |

Solution For Easy 1
5 + 8 = (L - 6)

Medium puzzle 1

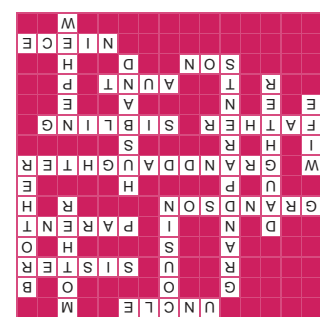
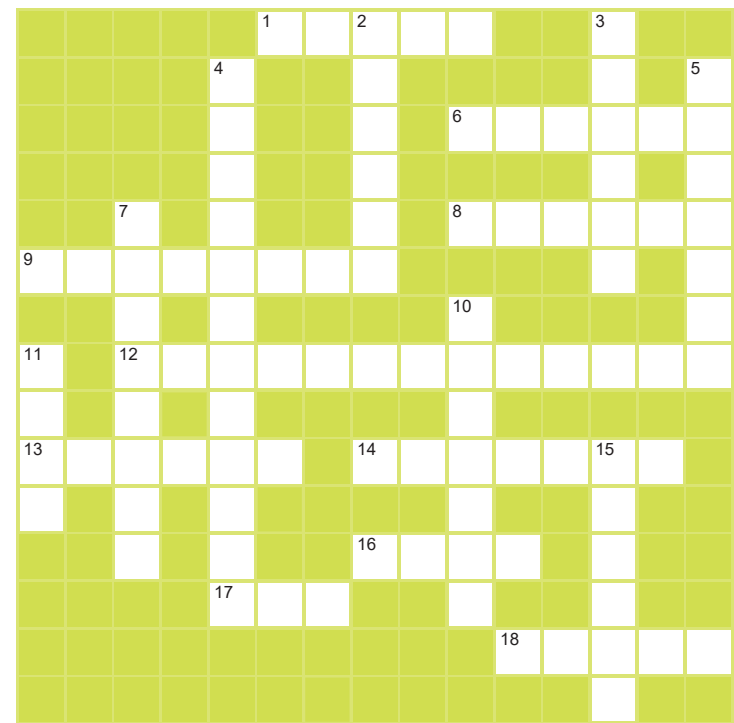
| | | | |
|----|----|---|---|
| 17 | 18 | | |
| 7 | 18 | | |
| + | - | x | ÷ |

Solution for Medium 1
L - 11 - 81 + 81

Hard puzzle 1

| | | | |
|----|----|---|---|
| 12 | 36 | | |
| 5 | 14 | | |
| + | - | x | ÷ |

Solution for Hard 1
21 - 5 + 91 + 98



Across

- Quitter’s cry (5)
- Female family member (5)
- Bring up (6)
- Ill (8)
- Jenna Bush Hagar to Barbara Bush (13)

Down

- Uncle’s son (6)
- “It’s not nice to fool ___ Nature!” (6)
- What were Russell and Anna Huxtable on “The Cosby Show”? (12)
- “Whew!” (7)
- Kate Hudson, to Goldie Hawn (8)
- Male spouse (7)
- “... pronounce you man and ___” (4)
- Sister’s son (6)

- “Our _____” (6)
- Any one of the ‘Little Women,’ relatively (7)
- Bee or Em (4)
- Royal wish (3)
- One of the family (5)

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